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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BERNARD SANDERS, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or even before the Earth was framed, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

On this historic day we ask Your richest blessings upon President Barack Obama, Vice President JOSEPH BIDEN, and the members of the Cabinet. O God, in these challenging times, help them to trust You with all their hearts and to depend upon Your providence to lead and guide them to Your desired destination.

In a special way today, we ask for Your healing hands to be placed upon Senator TEDDY KENNEDY. O, God, You are a healer and we claim Your promise that, if we will ask in faith, You will respond.

We thank You for what our eyes have seen and what our ears have heard on this great day.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BERNARD SANDERS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a letter to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, January 20, 2009.

### To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BERNARD SANDERS, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. SANDERS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate shall proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### INAUGURAL AND VILSACK NOMINATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I take to the floor right now to talk about my good friend, the former Governor of Iowa and our soon to be Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack.

Before I do, I would be remiss if I did not at this time talk about what it was like to be at the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States. This is my ninth inauguration. My first was Jimmy Carter when I was a freshman Congressman in 1977 and then two Reagans, Bush, two Clintons, two more Bushes. And so this is my ninth.

I can tell you, I have never seen anything such as this. To be out there today, I mean this is once in history that something such as this happens. I was watching a television program yesterday, a news program, and JIM CLYBURN, our colleague on the House side, was talking about the importance of today and what it meant to him.

He went on to talk about not only himself but so many people from where he is from in South Carolina and other places, elsewhere. He said, I remember my grandparents telling me about their parents being slaves and how close the connection was. And to think that today America saw inaugurated as our 44th President an African-American.

Not only does this say a great deal about Barack Obama, but it says a great deal about America and how far we have come. Someone asked me what I thought earlier about his speech. I thought three things: uplifting, sobering, and challenging. I think that is what we want from a President. We want a President who will lift us up, a President who will be honest and square with us but a President who also challenges us.

That is what I thought President Obama did in his speech today. So it was a great day, not only for President Obama and Michelle and their family, for our great friend, JOE BIDEN, now our Vice President, and Jill and his family, a great day for America, a real turning point, I think, in our history.

So we look forward with confidence and with optimism to the future. I wished to take the floor today to say a few words about my friend, Tom

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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